

February 18, 2011

RE: HB5287, AAC Licensure Of Facilities That Provide  
Temporary Care to Children With Minor Illnesses

My name is Judith McCormack, and I am a school nurse at an elementary school in the Town of Berlin. I am writing this letter in support of Dr. Matteo LoPreiato's proposal, to allow licensing for an urgent care center for mildly sick children who can not attend daycare or school.

In this letter, I would like to share with you a few reasons why I think the passing of this bill would be beneficial to our community.

As a school nurse, I am reminded daily of the struggles parents have to go through when their child is ill and they need to decide whether to send him/her to school, keep their child home and find someone to watch them or miss work themselves to care for their child. Often times they medicate their child with Tylenol or Ibuprofen and send them to school, hoping they will get through the day. As you can imagine, these children often do not feel well enough to be in school and end up in the Health Room after already spreading their germs to other children and staff members. Some children show up sick in my office right off the bus, and when I ask if mom knows they don't feel well, they tell me that she does but she had to go to work. When a child is sick and needs to go home, he/she may have to wait for hours for a parent to get coverage at work or find someone else to pick them up. In the majority of families, both parents work and don't have the luxury of having a caretaker available to watch a sick child.

Having an urgent care center to care for these children would be a perfect solution for these situations. The parents would have a safe, comfortable place to leave their children as well as a medical exam by a pediatrician to quickly diagnose an illness and start treatment as soon as possible. Transportation would also be provided so that the parent doesn't have to leave work to pick up their sick child at school and bring them to the center.

In my opinion, this would be a win-win situation for all involved.

First and foremost, sick children would get the medical care and attention they need and not have to endure the stress of a school day when they are feeling ill. Parents

would be able to be at work and have the peace of mind that their child is being cared for by medical professionals in a comfortable setting. Employers would see less sick time being used by parents who need to be home with their children, thus increasing productivity and decreasing benefit expense. There would be a decrease in the spread of illnesses in schools if sick children did not come to school, and those that get sick at school are picked up quickly and brought to the urgent care center. Those who may have an illness can be diagnosed early and have treatment started right away, enabling them to recover quicker and return back to school sooner, possibly decreasing the length of absences.

On behalf of the school nurses in Berlin, I would like to strongly support Dr. LoPreiato effort and urge you to give serious consideration to this proposed bill. If passed, it would have a positive impact on the children, parents, schools and employers in our community. Thank you for considering this important bill.

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